

Grassroots Coalition Fights for a Just Hurricane Florence Recovery!

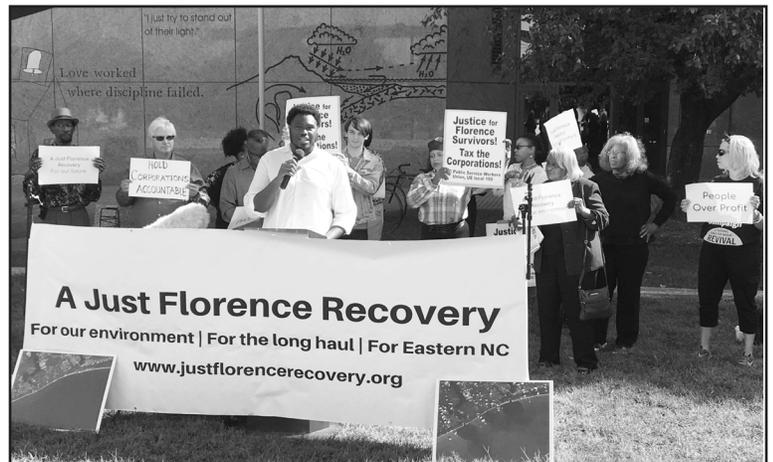
When Hurricane Florence hit southeastern N.C. it left over 18 billion gallons of rain, the most ever in recorded state history. It caused immeasurable damage and left 50 people dead. Many of our union members had been flooded out just two years earlier in Hurricane Matthews and had still not received money from the government for damages to their homes.

Immediately after Florence, grassroots groups across eastern NC and the Triangle, including allies in the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) farm workers union, Black Workers for Justice, the NC Environmental Justice Coalition, Poor People's Campaign, Blueprint NC, Southern Vision Alliance and many others launched the Just Florence Recovery alliance. With a warehouse in southeast Raleigh, they were able to dispatch over 300 planes for the days and weeks just after the storm hit, getting to areas neglected by FEMA and the Red Cross. They continue to dispatch rented U-Haul trucks and have delivered hundreds of tons of necessary cleaning supplies, food and other goods.

Challenge the State Government To Release Rainy Day Funds Now & Tax Corporations!

This people's alliance is not only engaged in direct aid efforts, it's also the only statewide force helping to organize poor and working people most impacted by the storm, disproportionately Black, Latinx and Native, to speak out directly about their needs and challenge the state government, who is sitting on over \$2 billion in "Rainy Day" funds.

On October 15, the state held its second Special Session to consider relief for damages caused by Florence. Currently, the state has a cap of 7.5% over last year's



A Just Florence Recovery press conference at the General Assembly in Raleigh on October 15, 2018.

budget on what can be spent. Even though NC already has the lowest corporate tax rate in the country, the state Legislature passed more tax breaks for corporations, scheduled to occur in 2019. The Just Florence Recovery alliance believes that the corporations should be first in line to help pay for the recovery, especially those that have caused industrial pollution in Eastern NC, like Duke Energy with their Coal Ash pits and Smithfield Foods with their CAFO's and untreated hog lagoons. We are callin on all members to **Take Action - Sign the UE150 Petition.**

In this Newsletter:

- ★ Butner DHHS Workers Fight Unjust Firings
- ★ Longleaf workers win safety upgrades
- ★ 1978 Sanitation strike recognized by City
- ★ University Workers Organize after \$15/hour victory and more!

'Zero Tolerance' Firings Have to Go!

DHHS Workers Challenge Conditions That Lead to Unjust Terminations

In mid-summer, three workers were unjustly terminated from Butner DHHS facilities - Sandra Moss and Sandy Fuquay from Central Regional Hospital and Tamiko McMillian from Murdoch Center. We are concerned that these terminations represent a new pattern of "Zero Tolerance" firings and do not actually account for the totality of the circumstances including the working conditions that DHHS workers are faced with every day. It is not just these three women that have been pushed out, but hundreds of qualified staff have either left, been terminated or retired early because of the working conditions, leading to further staffing shortages. DHHS has had a staffing shortage for the last few years and has been unable to fill hundreds of vacancies, due to high turn-over. The understaffing has resulted in a more severe Time and Attendance policy, along with higher levels of use of "red dot" forced overtime, all causing lots of stress for workers.

These terminations point to the continued difficulties facing DHHS employees. All three of these employees were not properly trained to be prepared for the situations that lead to their terminations. All three of these employees had no prior active disciplines in their files. All three of these women had false or misleading information in their termination letters.

Zero Tolerance is dangerous. It leads to staff being paralyzed and scared to intervene to help patients. UE150 helped prove this a few years ago when the former DHHS Secretary tried to implement Zero Tolerance, but then rolled it back over stated public concerns. In Ms. Fuquay and Ms. Moss's case there is no proven neglect, abuse or exploitation, either physical or emotional. In Ms. McMillian's case the physical harm alleged to have been done should not result in immediate termination, given the circumstances. Now these workers,



Sandy Fuquay (top right), HCT from CRH is fighting her unjust termination. Sandy meets with Bonita Johnson, UE150 Butner chapter President, along with steward Eric Hargrove.



Sandra Moss (2nd from Left), HCT, after her 2nd step grievance hearing at CRH, along with Kevin Yancey, UE150 Assistant Chief Steward, Bonita Johnson and witness Josephine Small.

and everyone on their units are terrified of who will be next. All are uncertain how to intervene during a moment of crisis at the risk of being fired. This will only lead to more patient and staff injuries, not less.

We call on all workers to step up and help us organize against the root causes of these unjustifiable firings. We must continue to push for a **Mental Health Workers Bill of Rights**. UE150 has regular quarterly meetings with DHHS Administration in Raleigh, but we need our members engaged and helping to document these issues. Together we can win!

Meet the Newly Elected UE150 Statewide Local Officers

President, Bryce Carter Street Maintenance, City of Greensboro

“Coming from a family that were state workers - both my mom and dad were state workers - I know the struggles in the workplace. Now that I am president I want to continue fight for workers rights, be a voice for those that don’t have a voice in the workplace, and to leave a legacy for my son. I have been in municipal work for 10 years, and have seen racism, favoritism and division in the workplace. Through solidarity we can break down barriers. Remember, change nothing and nothing changes.”



Vice President, Sekia Royall Food Service Assistant, Cherry Hospital

“I have been a state employee since 2012. The reason why I wanted to take on this position was to see change. To see change in the Eastern NC. This is so important because the rights of workers have been trampled on, lots of workers don’t even know their rights. There is lots of slave master mentality still going on in Eastern NC. People need to know that it is ok to speak up for themselves and not feel fear of retaliation. There is lots of favoritism and corruption in the DHHS facilities with management. Only organizing can change that.”



Recording Secretary, Aubrey Lauersdorf UNC Chapel Hill, Teaching Assistant

“I joined the union in 2017 as one of the early members of the UNC-Chapel Hill chapter, which is also called The Workers Union at UNC. I wanted to get more involved in my union, I was happy to accept a nomination. Before I went back to school and started teaching, I worked in a series of administrative support jobs, so I’m excited to bring some of the things I learned to my new role in union.”



STATEWIDE LOCAL OFFICERS CONTACT INFORMATION:

President	Bryce	Carter	336-383-9652	bcarter1220@gmail.com
Vice President	Sekia	Royall	919-330-7345	jurnee66441@gmail.com
Recording Secretary	Aubrey	Lauersdorf	608-512-6103	alauersd@gmail.com
Secretary Treasurer	Jim	Wrenn	252-641-0294	jimwrenn@embarqmail.com
Chief Steward	Raymond	Sanders	919-394-2155	rsanders5254@yahoo.com

University Workers Renew Organizing Efforts Across Several Campuses

UNC Chapel Hill Organizing Blitz

Following a successful week of recruiting events that targeted UNC's incoming cohort of graduate student workers, the Workers Union at UNC completed their chapter's first organizing blitz in October. Reflecting UE's principles of rank-and-file unionism, UNC members planned their blitz at weekly meetings at a local library over the past four months.

On the first day of the blitz, volunteers from the UNC chapter and other UE chapters across the state passed out flyers at park-and-ride lots in Chapel Hill. On the second day, union volunteers talked with workers at UNC's annual Employee Appreciation Day celebration. Many workers completed surveys about the challenges they face on the job, which will help the UNC chapter



understand which issues are most important to workers on campus.

The following week, the Workers Union at UNC hosted drop-in meetings at the local McDonalds, where workers were able to learn more about the union and speak about workplace issues with union members and staff. UNC members are enthusiastic as they begin phone banking the workers whose contact information they gathered during the blitz. If you're interested in helping the UNC chapter phone bank workers, contact Steve (608) 287-6296.

N.C. State U. Workers Build Organizing Brigade

Union supporters helped distribute over 100 fliers at the International Housekeeper week events at NCSU on September 10. They collected over 50 contacts of interested campus workers and have begun small group meetings with housekeepers across campus.

Then, on September 28, the Graduate Workers Organizing Committee hosted a public UE150 meeting where participants got to learn about the 20 years of history of organizing campus workers, since UE150 began organizing UNC system workers in 1997.

Following this momentum, over 20 grad workers and undergrad students attended an "Organizing Brigade" training on October 12 where they mapped most of the entire NCSU campus. Everyone took an outreach assignment including several buildings. The goal is to survey as many housekeepers, groundskeepers, maintenance and food service workers as possible, and gather contact information, organize small group meetings at lunch breaks or after work, and identify worker-leaders to help build the union.



Pictured above: Grad workers and student attend organizing brigade training on Oct. 12 at NCSU in Raleigh.

N.C. Central University Workers Organizing Update

UE150 leaders have been widely passing out leaflets to NCCU workers in housekeeping, groundskeeping, HVAC and maintenance. Many have reported problems with not having enough staff and having to cover more and more area with less workers. The University is in the process of rolling out a new scheduling mechanism to further micro-manage the workers. Workers have also reported bad mold in several buildings that could result in serious health problems.

City Council Issues Proclamation to Commemorate 1978 Sanitation Strike

Almost 100 people attended a program marking the 40th anniversary of the 1978 Rocky Mount Sanitation Workers' Strike, sponsored by the Phoenix Historical Society at BTW Community Center on Saturday, October 13, 2018. A highlight of the program was the reading of a city council resolution, passed earlier that week, recognizing the strike and honoring the courage of the workers. Read by PHS member and city interim planning director JoSeth Bocook, the resolution ends with:

“Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the City of Rocky Mount does hereby apologize to the family of Alexander Evans and the sanitation workers for the actions taken by City Government in 1978 and recognizes that the actions of the sanitation workers and their community supporters in 1978 made an improvement in racial justice in Rocky Mount.”

Five of the former workers from 1978, **Leonard Giles, Willie Moody, Robert Smith, English Edmondson and Rudolph Edmondson**, as well as Marjorie Evans, widow of Alexander Evans, were present to receive the apology and copy of the resolution from Councilman Reuben Blackwell. Leonard Giles, the strike leader in 1978, spoke for the workers. He remembered “When we went on strike, the first person to come to us was Naomi Green. She told us to stick together and it was time someone stood up to the city of Rocky Mount.” Green was the local leader of Southern Christian



Leadership Conference, which came to the aid of the sanitation workers.

Richard Petway spoke on behalf of the Rocky Mount City Workers Association-UE Local 150, which claims its origins in the 1978 strike. Petway urged the city to meet and confer with the Union to resolve issues with city workers and called on the city to agree to allow voluntary payroll deduction of union dues, as other cities in North Carolina have.

Panel speaker **Saladin Muhammad** of Black Workers for Justice and UE Local 150 called on city manager Rochelle Small-Toney to distribute a copy of city council resolution on the 1978 strike to all city employees. Muhammad also recalled that the 1978 strike influenced the struggle of Rocky Mount K-Mart workers in 1981 and the formation of Black Workers For Justice with Alexander Evans as first chairperson. Muhammad also noted that three members of the BWFJ joined Naomi Green as plaintiffs in the 1983 voting rights lawsuit, which is also seen as an outgrowth of the 1978 strike.

Greensboro City Workers Meet-n-Confer with City Officials



On Tuesday, October 26, officers of the Greensboro City Workers Union chapter of UE150 meet with City officials to discuss a petition, signed by over half the Water Resources workers to demand the option of Paid Overtime or Use of Comp Time. They also fought for a Step Pay Plan, rather than unfair merit pay.

Longleaf Food Service Workers Organize and Win Safety Upgrades!

In September 2018, we the workers in the Nutritional Services Department of Longleaf Neuro-Medical Center received a surprise visit from OSHA. The reason for the visit was that we had filed a complaint about issues pertaining to the equipment that is used to prepare meals at the facility. There is one piece of equipment that is used daily and had missing knobs and the only way to operate the equipment was to turn the equipment off and on using pliers, in which, to do that you had metal touching metal which could lead to the hazard of workers being shocked. OSHA demanded that there be new knobs placed on that piece of equipment.

OSHA also recommended something else that was not mentioned in the filed complaint. When OSHA visited it was a very warm day in the Nutritional Services Department. The OSHA Representative recommended that the facility provide a space or a breakroom for the workers that was cool when the weather is hot, and warm when the weather is cold so that workers could have a decent space in which to take their breaks. These are just two of the many issues that we workers have faced and complained about for years at our facility. We, the workers, and UE150 union members consider the recommendations of OSHA to be a victory on our behalf and a morale booster also.

- Patrice Jacobs, President, Longleaf Chapter, UE local 150



Food Service workers using pliers to turn the stove at Longleaf - a clear safety violation!

After Convention resolves to host more member trainings, Caswell & Longleaf Center Leaders Gather for Stewards Training

Union members want more training. This was made loud and clear at our state union convention the August. Now, UE150 is setting up trainings all across the state to help develop the skills of our members to build the union, defend themselves and win changes. **If you would like to help organize a training in your area, please call Chief Steward Raymond Sanders at 919-349-2155**

Trainings include:

- Handling grievances,
- Union functioning,
- Understanding State Laws,
- Organize new Member
- Beating Apathy - getting members active,
- Effective meetings with the boss and more!



Caswell & Longleaf stewards and officers gather on Sept 26 for training in Wilson.

Union Members Mourn the Passing of Two Workers, Black Workers Lives Matter!

Monique “Xan” Blackwell, Presente!

NC Central University, housekeeper

NCCU workers and UE150 members are deeply saddened by the loss of Ms. Xantippe Blackwell, a building environmental services technician, who passed away on Monday, Sept. 24, due to a respiratory illness. Xan had been working for NCCU for 18 years.

Many may have known that in the early 2000’s, **Xan was a founding member of UE150 union on campus. She was shortly elected chapter President.** Xan helped play a key role in forcing the UNC System President to meet with union housekeepers, food service workers, grounds keeper and maintenance workers that were organizing across the state to demand better wages, safety, and a voice on the job.

Over the last several years, the union has been inactive at NCCU campus, but it has been building momentum and strength amongst state and city workers elsewhere across NC. UE150 recently began to revitalize the union at NCCU, after winning the raise to \$15/hr for all state workers in early 2018.



Workers Have Questions...

Was Xan’s respiratory condition and asthma made worse by years of exposure to mold, asbestos and other known air pollutants present in many NCCU buildings? Workers must join the fight for a healthy and safe work place. UE150 has been meeting with workers on campus to encourage them to document the mold and other unsafe working conditions on campus.

Sherita Stringer, Presente!

City of Greensboro, Water Resources

On Thursday, November 1, the Water Resources Department in the City of Greensboro was conducting exercises where workers climbed a water tower. Multiple employees were performing an internal inspection of the water tower. As Sherita was attempting to climb down the tower, she fell over 80 feet to her death.

Sherita was only 28 years old and had been working for the City since 2016.

At the time of the printing of this newsletter, UE150 activists **Ramone Johnson** (UE150 chapter Vice President and Chair of Water Resources Safety Committee) and **Chris Yancey** are conducting an active investigation into the circumstances that lead to this preventable death.



Charlotte Lightrail Workers Win Pay Classification changes

As part of the budget campaign fight in early 2018, the Charlotte City Workers Union chapter of UE150 raised concerns about over-work and misclassification of employees in LYNX lightrail. The maintenance workers in Rail Car Maintenance Department ended up getting reclassified, earning a roughly 5% wage increase.

Just the previous year, UE150 had won the implementation of a Step Plan, paying workers based on years of service. In order to do this, the City had to develop a long list of pay grades, often lumping workers in different departments into the same pay grade. For the RCM workers that won this classification change, they were given the job title “Transportation Electronics Techs”, which was also shared with workers in the Charlotte Department of Transportation, even though the LYNX workers in RCM had a much larger set of skills and job duties. After a fight, they won reclassification to become “Rail Car Maintenance Technicians”. On top of the 4% merit raise, those workers got a decent raise! However, other LYNX workers in Maintenance of Way are rightfully upset because they did not get the classification change they are fighting for. The struggle continues!



UE150 Executive Board member, LYNX employee Kris Barrows speaks at press conference in City Hall.

ue150.org/solidarity

- ★ Make a difference for yourselves and your community.
- ★ Receive assistance to organize your co-workers at your workplace;
- ★ better staffing ratios, healthcare and other reforms;
- ★ Workers Bill of Rights including better wages, safety, stronger grievance procedures, end to discrimination;
- ★ Reform state legislation for collective bargaining.
- ★ Improve workplace standards through collective action and meet-in-confer;
- ★ Join a statewide union to:
- the community to join us!
- members to share with
- We encourage our
- to keep organizing!
- We need your support

Supporting Member \$5/month

Member Today!

Become a UE150 Supporting

UE local 150
 NC Public Service Workers Union
 PO Box 46263
 Raleigh, NC 27620

